



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Policy Manual

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Purpose

This issuance establishes policy and procedures for utilizing International Social Services (ISS) as a resource for children and families with international family connections to improve permanency options for children in care.

Authority

- N.J.S.A. 30:4C-12.1, Search for Relatives of Child in Custody of Family Services
- N.J.A.C. 10:122D, Services for Children in Out-of-Home Placement Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act 2008

Policy:

A) International Social Services

1. International Social Services (ISS) provides services to children, families, and adults who encounter socio-legal problems in 140 countries around the world. ISS provides case management, technical assistance, and other services as a key resource for obtaining and understanding necessary information to support the family plan, child placement, and permanency options.
2. International Social Service-USA (ISS-USA) is the United States of America's branch for International Social Service. Interstate Services contracts with ISS-USA to facilitate services with participating countries.

B) The International Social Service Case Manager

1. The ISS-USA Case Manager coordinates assessments and services for the child and family with ISS correspondents around the world. The ISS-USA Case Manager may be referred to as the International Social Services Case Manager or the Intercountry Case Manager.
2. The ISS-USA Case Manager works with the DCF International Liaison within Interstate Services. The ISS-USA Case Manager coordinates assessments and services for the child and family with ISS correspondents around the world.

C) ISS-USA Services

1. The services ISS-USA provides for children under the supervision of CP&P include:
 - i) **Child Welfare Check:** A check on a child when there is not an immediate allegation of neglect or abuse of the child. A social worker makes a home visit to ensure the child is safe and present in the home. A child welfare check can be requested by anyone, and the child does not have to be in the care or custody of CP&P. This requires the full address for the child.
 - ii) **Community Resource Survey:** A comprehensive, community specific, report on the community to which a child formerly resided or may return. The report includes all resources available to the child and highlights dangers and deficits in the community that may pose a threat to the child.
 - iii) **Criminal Background or Child Abuse Registry Check:** The criminal background and Child Abuse Registry Check is for prospective resource parents who have lived outside of the United States. Please note that not all countries have a child abuse registry See, Child Abuse Registries in Foreign Countries and Geographic Entities.
 - iv) **Document Tracing:** Locating important documents including birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, or adoption records. Date of birth, death or marriage, along with the city, hospital, location of the event, and parent's names are needed to request copies of documents.
 - v) **Home Study for Parental Custody:** Completed Home Study on a parent to determine if the parent is interested, able, and appropriate to care for the child.
 - vi) **Home Study for Possible Relative Placement or Visitation:** Home studies for the return of custody to relatives, the assessments are not completed for licensure or approval for foster care, Kinship Legal Guardianship, or adoption. The home study is completed to determine if a relative is interested, able, and appropriate to care for the child. If

the placement is intended as an adoption, see definition of home study below.

- vii) **Home Study for Adoption by Relative or Kin in Non-Hague Countries:** Home Study completed for adoption purposes. Except when the relative or kin resides in a country that is party to the Hague Convention on Adoption. See, [CP&P-IV-C-9-100](#), **Hague Adoption Policy**.
 - viii) **Person Tracing:** Search for a parent or relative to notify him or her that a minor relative is in the care of CP&P to determine if the family member is interested in participating in permanency planning for the child, including being considered as a placement option, and notification of termination of parental rights proceedings. See, [CP&P-III-C-4-100](#), **Locating a Missing Child/Family and Searching**.
 - ix) **Post-Placement Follow-Up:** Routine assessment on a child whom CP&P placed in another country after receiving a favorable home study from ISS.
 - x) **Protective Service Alert:** Alert local law enforcement or child welfare agency that there is a threat to a child in its jurisdiction. Alert local law enforcement that a perpetrator of child abuse is living in or is moving to the jurisdiction. An address for the child is needed for an agency to take action.
 - xi) **Repatriation:** Repatriating United States citizens from abroad, including unaccompanied minors. CP&P is notified of the minor in need of assistance including assessing relatives, services, and custody for placement if no relative can assume care for the child.
2. ISS-USA **does not** provide the following:
- i) Translation of CP&P documents into the language of the receiving country;
 - ii) Translation into English of documents received from ISS Units abroad.
 - iii) Funds for CP&P staff to travel to visit a child in CP&P custody living abroad;
 - iv) Funds to bring children back to the United States after an overseas placement;
 - v) Funds to bring family members from abroad for court hearings or to take custody of a child;
 - vi) Legal advice; and
 - vii) Home studies in Hague Convention Countries.

The relative studies do not provide licensure or approval for foster care or adoption.

D) Worker Safety

1. Prior to traveling to place the child, the Worker shall confer with the Office of Emergency Management for country specific safety concerns.
2. Upon entry into the country, the Worker shall notify the consulate, in consultation with the Office of Emergency Management, and provide the length of the stay and the location of the placement. In the event of an emergency, the Worker shall notify the consulate and Supervisor. The Worker shall contact the Supervisor daily and notify the consulate of challenges and safety concerns.

Procedures:

1) Referring Family to ISS Services

The Worker completes a CP&P [Form 15-11](#), **ISS-USA Outgoing Case Referral Form** and submits it to: DCFinternationalSocialServices@dcf.nj.gov. A separate referral is required for each requested service. The following information is needed for the referral:

- i. Name and Date of Birth
- ii. Address;
- ii. Country;
- iv. Phone number;
- v. Last known employment;
- vi. Social media;
- vii. Relatives in the country;

2) Assigned ISS-USA

The assigned ISS-USA Case Manager sends an acknowledgement letter to the Worker that the case is opened. If ISS-USA requires additional information, a request is sent to the Worker. If no other information is available or provided, ISS-USA notifies CP&P via letter indicating ISS-USA is unable to provide services at this time. **Note:** The most common reasons ISS-USA is unable to open a case referred by CP&P are:

- i) Insufficient information about the individual(s) being traced;
- ii) The service requested is not a service that the correspondent can complete;
- iii) Natural or manmade disasters, including war, flooding, earthquakes;
- iv) No available ISS Unit or contractor in the country where service is being requested.

2) Managing a Case with ISS-USA

- a. The ISS-USA Case Manager provides at least monthly updates on the case to the Worker. The Worker responds to all e-mails and phone calls from the ISS-USA Case Manager within 48 hours, whenever possible.

- b. When any change in the case occurs, the Worker contacts the ISS-USA Case Manager and the DCF International Liaison. Listed below are examples of when to contact the ISS-USA Case Manager:
 - i) Next court date(s);
 - ii) Securing other permanency plans;
 - iii) New information is obtained related to the service requested or individuals involved in the case;
 - iv) Changing or canceling a service request;
 - v) Birth of a sibling if they are being added to the request;
 - vi) Closing a case at CP&P.
- c. Placement out of the country does not occur until the completed home study has been received and post placement service arrangements made. Any decision to place a child considers the child's needs, resources, and strengths of the potential placement family. When the child is placed outside of the United States and custody is transferred to the relative or kin, the Worker requests Post Placement Visits from ISS-USA and any supportive services required to ensure that the child's needs for safety, well-being, and healthy connections are met. These services are requested through the receiving country, with at least two reports received from the supervising agency. These reports address the child's adjustment in the home and overall well-being, including health, mental health, relationships, and educational progress.
- d. The ISS-USA Case Manager receives and reviews the reports requested prior to placement pertaining to the family and services provided to the child. The ISS-USA Case Manager forwards the reports to the DCF International Liaison. If any child welfare or protective services concerns are noted in these reports, the ISS-USA Case Manager requests that the local ISS correspondent provides a child welfare or protective services assessments and advises the DCF International Liaison of the situation.
- e. CP&P is unable to provide ongoing financial or medical coverage for children placed outside the US who are not adopted, or special medical, educational, or mental health needs, including medication, become the responsibility of the receiving family.
- f. When the child is placed outside of the United States and custody is transferred to the caregiver or relative, the Worker requests Post Placement Visits from ISS-USA and any supportive services required to ensure that the child's needs for safety, well-being, and healthy connections are met.
- g. If a child is placed outside of the United States, and custody is transferred to the relative or kin, the CP&P Worker requests Post Placement visits, from ISS-USA, any supportive services required to ensure that the child's needs are met, and the living arrangement remains stable. These services are requested through the

receiving country, with at least two reports received from the supervising agency. These reports address the child's adjustment in the home and overall well-being, including health, mental health, relationships and educational progress.

- h. The ISS-USA Case Manager receives and reviews the reports requested prior to placement pertaining to the family and services provided to the child. The ISS-USA Case Manager forwards the reports to the DCF International Liaison. If any child welfare or protective services concerns are noted in these reports, the ISS-USA Case Manager requests that the local ISS correspondent provides a child welfare or protective services assessments and advises the DCF International Liaison of the situation.
- i. ISS-USA provides information on what services are available in each country. These services may include:
 - i) A post placement report to ensure the safety of the child; and
 - ii) Assistance from the correspondent in finding local social service providers (only available in some countries).

Note: When the Worker needs to arrange placement, the ISS-USA Case Manager coordinates direct contact with the ISS Local Branch or Child Welfare Agency.

3) Closing a Case with ISS-USA

- a. If the service requested by CP&P from ISS-USA is not completed when CP&P is ready to close the case with the child, the Worker notifies the assigned ISS-USA Case Manager via email and copies the DCF ISS Liaison. If there is no assigned ISS-USA Case Manager, the Worker emails the DCF ISS Liaison.
- b. The Worker emails the DCF International Liaison when the request is no longer needed. If the case has been assigned, the Worker emails the ISS-USA Case Manager and copy's the DCF ISS Liaison.
- c. The ISS-USA Case Manager closes terminates involvement with the family by notifying the DCF International Liaison via email. The DCF International Liaison notifies the Worker via email. The Worker documents service termination in NJ SPIRIT in a contact activity NJSPIRIT. See, CP&P [Form 26-52](#), **Contact Sheet**.
- d. Prior to terminating involvement with ISS-USA, DCF closes the case.
- e. Placement out of country does not occur until the completed home study has been received and post placement service arrangements made.

4) Contact the DCF International Liaison

- a. A Worker contacts the DCF International Liaison when:
 - i) Opening a new case requiring international services (includes gathering information);
 - ii) Asking a question regarding the ISS-USA Referral;
 - iii) Requesting information about document translation services for documents originating from CP&P or received by CP&P from ISS-USA;

- iv) Requesting that a case be expedited;
- v) Needing assistance with other international dimensions to the case, (i.e., resources or services not provided by ISS-US).

5) Translation and Interpretation Services

All documents in a foreign language received from or sent to kin shall be translated into or from English into the native language of the individual expected to read or respond to the document. Local translation providers and resources can be identified through the Area and Local Offices.

See [CP&P-II-C-3-300](#), **Need for Interpreters and Resources**.

Key Terms

- **DCF International Social Service Liaison:** Is the liaison between CP&P and ISS-USA. The DCF International Social Service Liaison facilitates contact with ISS-USA, providing information to Workers on the international protocol for working with children with potential international family connections.
- **Hague Adoption:** Through Interstate, CP&P refers children in the custody or guardianship of CP&P for a home study for adoption placement with a relative or kin in a country participating in The Hague Convention.

Related Policy:

- [CP&P-II-C-3-300](#), **Need for Interpreters and Resources**
- [CP&P-III-C-4-100](#), **Locating a Missing Child/Family and Searching**
- [CP&P-IV-C-9-100](#), **Hague Adoption**
- [Hague Convention Countries](#)

Forms and Attachments:

- CP&P [Form 15-11](#), **ISS-USA Outgoing Case Referral Form**
- CP&P [Form 26-52](#), **Contact Sheet**

Policy History:

- 3-7-2022, Revised
- 10-15-2012, New